

RUSSIANS HAVE ARMY IN REAR OF VON HINDENBURG

Repulse Strong Force, Preventing Germans From Crossing the Vistula.

EFFORT TO ENTRAP INVADERS SUSPECTED

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.
PETROGRAD, Dec. 19.—The report issued by the Russian General Staff to-night puts a different complexion on the situation in Poland from that asserted in Berlin.

The General Staff announces that a Russian army is operating successfully in the rear of the force Marshal von Hindenburg has drawn up west of Warsaw. There is a bare intimation in the announcement that the advanced German army may find itself in a trap when the Russians before Warsaw are strengthened sufficiently by reinforcements to take the offensive.

To-day at Dobryn, eighteen miles southwest of Plock and fifty miles in the rear of the advance operations of the Germans, a Russian army repulsed a German force and prevented it from crossing the Vistula. The text of the official statement was as follows:

On the right bank of the Vistula there has been no change. An attempt by the enemy to cross the river near Dobryn was stopped by our artillery and he was hastily obliged to evacuate an island in mid-stream which he had occupied. We captured his pontoons.

The fighting along the Bzura River is beginning to develop. We have repulsed several German attacks.

In the other districts on the left of the Vistula the engagements have been nothing more than outpost affairs.

In western Galicia, on the left bank of the Dunajec, on the night of December 17-18 we captured a thousand prisoners.

A strong force of the Przemysl garrison is trying to make its way east in the direction of Bierzec. Our troops are fighting there under favorable conditions.

The reference to operations in western Galicia, presumably in the area between the River Dunajec and Cracow, suggests that the Austrian advance from the Carpathians has been repulsed, and that the Russians were not compelled to withdraw from fortified positions southeast of Cracow.

BERLIN CONSERVATIVE.

Warns German People Not to Expect Too Great a Success.

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.

LONDON, Dec. 19.—It is now apparent from the German War Office statements again, and without awaiting at their face value the statements of the Russian General Staff or of the correspondents in Petrograd, that the Russians have suffered no important reverse and that the outbreak of joy in Berlin was premature.

The news from Berlin to-night was that there is disappointment in the German capital over the brevity of the official despatches and the failure of the Government to specify where and when the great victory reported was won. The German newspapers are modifying and minimizing the Government claims and are warning the people that too much must not be expected; that it may be several days before the successes of Von Hindenburg's forces can be detailed.

Such facts as are available lead military critics to believe that the Grand Duke Nicholas is resorting to strategy such as caused disaster to invading armies of Germans and Austrians earlier in the year—a withdrawal of his forces to carefully selected ground where defenses have been prepared and where he plans to concentrate heavy reinforcements. There is no news whatever indicating that the Russians have been crushed or that they have lost very heavily.

In front of Warsaw, on a line from sixteen to forty miles west of the city, the Russians are beating back German attacks and are gaining the time necessary for the arrival of masses of fresh troops. Unless the Germans can break through the line of defense and take Warsaw within three or four days, military experts believe, the Russians will once more develop a flanking movement that must compel the Germans to take the roads back to their own frontier.

In spite of Marshal von Hindenburg's stunning attacks west of Warsaw, the Russians have not been diverted from their positions around Cracow, which remains the thermometer of the campaign in the east. In spite of Austrian reinforcements coming through the Carpathians, it seems certain now that the Russians were able to maintain a great force in Galicia west of the Dunajec River and toward Cracow, while checking the Austrians as they attempted to march down the slopes of the Carpathians.

So long as the Russians continue to menace Cracow and push toward the Silesian frontier the German operations in Poland are pointless and can have no important result except the political advantage to be gained if Warsaw can be taken.

The Russian official report states that the German army commanded by General von Francois, which was defeated at Gumbinnen in northwest Poland, has been driven out of the border of southern East Prussia. Von Francois attempted to continue an advance he had made from Koenigsberg and through Mlawka to a point where he could unite with the Germans on the left bank of the Vistula, but the Russians first checked, then routed his force. It is probable now that the Russians are again in southern East Prussia and are renewing the attempt to unite with their newly routed army, the bulk of the line of the Angerap River in northern East Prussia. Many Germans are reported to have been made prisoners in the fighting around Mlawka.

The only conclusion to be drawn from the official news of both German and Russian War Offices is that Von Hindenburg, after a brilliant movement, has been stopped within two days' march of Warsaw.

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Warsaw, and that the German left wing and right wing—East Prussia and Cracow—are on the defensive. An explanation given here for the exaggerated and expansive claims of victory made by the Germans is that something of the sort was necessary to offset, throughout the Balkan States and in Constantinople, Serbia's recent victory over the Austrians and the humiliating retreat of all Austrian troops from Serbian territory.

Austria's even more highly colored claims are accounted for on the score of relieving Hungarian apprehensions. Hungary appears to be alive with diffidence—ashamed of Austrian weakness and furiously angry at Germany's domination.

While the Russians hold their ground in East Prussia and before Cracow military critics here will not agree that Russia is in serious danger. Undoubtedly a redistribution of troops to meet new problems is going on, and perhaps the most external sign of the new is that the strength of the Russian defense before Warsaw is likely to give time for the redistribution. When that is accomplished another German retreat from Poland can be looked for.

As the weeks go by it is increasingly apparent that Gen. Joffre, commanding in the west, and the Grand Duke Nicholas, commanding in the east, are working in perfect understanding and cooperation. The activity of the Russians a few weeks ago compelled the Germans to withdraw a considerable number of troops from Belgium and France. Immediately the Allies took the offensive and have been pushing back the German line at various important points between the Belgian coast and Alsace.

Now it is reported that Germany intends to send troops from Poland to her western battle front. If that occurs another powerful offensive movement on the part of the Russians is confidently expected.

2,949 KILLED IN AMBUSH.

Deaths Head Hussars Annihilated at Lodz by Russian Dragoons.

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 19.—During the recent fighting at Lodz a regiment of the Prussian Death Head Hussars was drawn into an ambush by Russian dragoons. Of the 3,000 Hussars only one officer and fifty men, who were made prisoners, escaped death.

DENY GERMAN CLAIMS.

Russians Say They Are Not Beaten in Poland.

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 19.—Semi-official communications from the Russian command in chief, although giving an exact account only of actions of secondary importance, faithfully reflect the course of the operations. The German communications have been very different. The last Prussian story was that the Russians were completely defeated at all points of the front and had lost a campaign which the Germans had won brilliantly.

The victorious communiqué does not mention the slightest strategic or military detail. It does not give any geographic name. It does not speak of prisoners having been taken or of such trophies as usually fall to conquerors. It confines itself to vague declarations of a German triumph.

The truth is that the Germans were driven from Cieszanow with the Russians at their heels. The German staff admits that the Russians are already upon them.

CHANCELLOR'S SON BADLY HURT.

Young Von Bethmann-Hollweg Is Prisoner of Russians.

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.

COPENHAGEN, Dec. 19.—According to *Vorwaerts* of Berlin the wounds of a son of Imperial Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, who was taken prisoner by the Russians, are serious. He is wounded in the head and legs.

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TO OPEN AMERICAN HOSPITAL. Red Cross Plans Establishment Near Metz.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19.—In a letter received at the Red Cross headquarters here to-day Dr. Nordhoff-Jung, who is in charge of the Red Cross hospital in Munich, says steps are being taken for the establishment of a large American Red Cross hospital near the battle front in the vicinity of Metz for the care of the wounded whose condition is too serious to permit their removal to greater distances.

Dr. Nordhoff-Jung says all the available hospitals are filled with wounded from the armies along the southern German border and that German, French and British wounded are being crowded into private residences in Munich. She adds that, "thanks to the generous help from headquarters," the Red Cross hospital at Munich is free from want for the next five or six months. Dr. Nordhoff-Jung is prepared to start for the front to open the proposed hospital and says that a professor of surgery in Munich and his staff have volunteered to accompany her.

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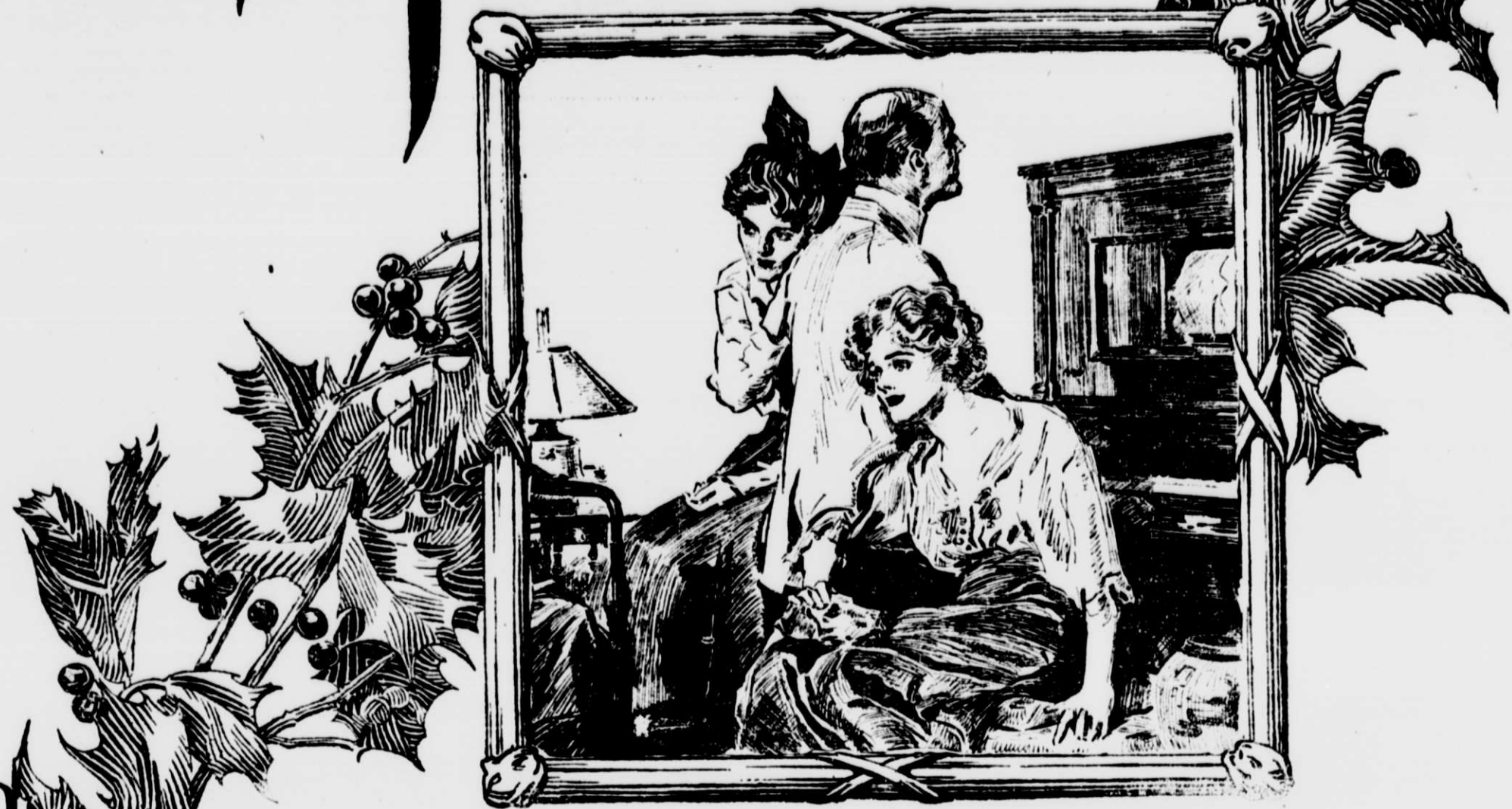
SANK WITH THE MESSUDIYEH.

ATLANTA, via London, Dec. 19.—It is announced here, through semi-official channels that 100 of the officers and men of the Turkish battleship *Messudiyeh*, including some German officers, lost their lives when the battleship was sunk by the British submarine B-11 in the Dardanelles.

The contradictory official Turkish report that all on board the vessel were saved.

All French Cabinet in Session.
Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.
PARIS, Dec. 19.—There was a full Cabinet session in this city to-day. President Poincaré presided.

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